

The new Connection



Discussing material presented at a “2011 Hurricane Preparations” Conference sponsored by Valley Baptist and Anthelio Healthcare Solutions are Ingrid Steinbach, RN, CEN, Emergency Services Director for VBMC-Brownsville; Marcia Fuller, MHAN, BSN, CEN, CPEN, Education Specialist with VBMC-Harlingen; Sarah Souffrant, RN; and Ann McDonald-Upton, CNO for VBMC-H. The conference, attended by about 70 people, was designed to augment hospitals’ Emergency Management Plans with information from outside the hospital environment. Presenters from various local, state and national agencies stressed the need to be prepared during hurricane season, which began June 1.



Helping Our Troops: VBMC Employees Adopt A Platoon



Valley Baptist employees have a special opportunity to help our troops this summer through the “Adopt-a-Platoon” Independence Day Campaign, with the goal being to raise \$10,000 to send 358 care packages of much-needed supplies to six platoons fighting for our freedoms in Afghanistan, Iraq and on ships in hostile and remote areas of the world.

“Our service members overseas are still living in war-time conditions -- including many who are living in tents in the desert,” said Vince Randazzo, Director of Human Resources Information Services and coordinator of the Adopt-a-Platoon campaign at Valley Baptist. “Let’s do our part to make this Fourth of July a reminder to them that they are not forgotten. Between now and July 4th, you can donate toward care packages that will be sent to our service members overseas.”

Employees can conveniently make donations to this worthwhile project at

any of the gift shops, service centers or First Community Bank locations at VBMC-Harlingen or VBMC-Brownsville. Donations can be made through cash, check, credit card or payroll deduction.

Those who donate \$10 or more toward care packages for our troops will be entered into a drawing to win one of three \$100 HEB gift cards -- or a one-hour “Classic Massage” from Spa La Posada.

The care packages -- which cost an average of \$28 each to fill and ship to the Middle East -- include tooth brushes, hand sanitizer, and other toiletries, as well as granola bars, cookies, beef jerky and other food items. Also included are socks, playing cards, and various seasonal items.

Vince said sending the care packages can be a way to build morale for our troops and express our appreciation to active-duty military personnel. “The physical conditions they must endure are difficult and they may be separated from loved ones

for long periods of time,” Vince noted.

Vince knows first-hand what’s it’s like for the troops. Before coming to Valley Baptist, he served in the Air Force during Operation Desert Shield and Desert Storm. He was surprised to receive care packages sent by “kind-hearted strangers” in the United States.

“It was the coolest thing that said that the people back home were thinking about us,” Vince recalls. “In the desert, having those extras definitely meant something to us. We wrote back to say we appreciated their thoughts and their blessings.”

Now through Adopt-a-Platoon, Vince is thrilled to be able to be the sender of the gifts to our troops, whereas before he was on the receiving end of the acts of kindness. Vince was challenged to find a way to get Valley Baptist involved in supporting our troops by VBHS CEO James Eastham during a system-wide workout. Shortly afterwards, Vince discovered the non-profit Adopt-a-Platoon program -- based right here in the Valley. Adopt-a-Platoon sends over 200,000 care packages to our troops every year.

The founder of Adopt-a-Platoon, Ida Hägg of Rio Hondo, started the program when her son was stationed in Bosnia 20 years ago, and he asked his mother’s assistance to get mail and packages to the troops -- many of whom received nothing from home.

For more information on Adopt-a-Platoon, contact Vince at 389-1103, or by e-mail at Vince.Randazzo@valleybaptist.net; or Enrica Rincones at 389-6750 (Enrica.Kirksey@valleybaptist.net).

2011 Newborn Intensive Care Reunion in Brownsville



Valley Baptist Health Plans Wins Diabetes Award - Again

Valley Baptist Health Plans has won an award from the Texas Diabetes Council for above-average care of diabetes -- for the second straight year.

Dr. Luis Calo, Chief Medical Officer for Valley Baptist Health Plans, and Sherry S. Griffin, Senior Vice President for Managed Care for Valley Baptist, said the awards show Valley Baptist Health Plan's commitment to the quality of care of diabetes, which is so critical in the Valley. Hispanics are twice as likely to develop diabetes as the general population, and the Valley has a high rate of diabetes-related deaths.

The Texas Diabetes Council is appointed by the governor and works with private and public health care organizations to promote diabetes prevention and awareness.

Valley Baptist Health Plans is headquartered locally in the Valley, with offices at 2005 Ed Carey, across from VBMC-H. For more information, visit www.valleybaptisthealthplans.com or call (956) 389-2273 or 1-800-829-6440.

Dr. Hussain Wins Emergency Nurses Association Award

Dr. Khadim Hussain, MD, Emergency Dept. Physician at Valley Baptist-Brownsville, has received a state-wide award from the Emergency Nurses Association (ENA) for his work to provide award-winning emergency care for Valley patients.



often seen but not heard and who donates countless resources assisting an ENA member or members in achieving state, local or national mission and goals.”

Dr. Hussain was named the winner of the Texas Emergency Nurses Association State Council’s annual “Behind the Scenes Award,” which recognizes “an ENA advocate who is

The award was presented at the Emergency Nurses’ Association quarterly state meeting in Corpus Christi.

“Dr. Hussain has been invaluable to our efforts to provide the very best emergency care to the patients of Brownsville and the Lower Valley area,” said Leslie Bingham, CEO for VBMC-B.

Ingrid Steinbach, RN, CEN, Director of Emergency & Trauma Services for Valley Baptist-Brownsville, noted that under the leadership of Dr. Hussain and other emergency physicians, the Valley Baptist-Brownsville Emergency Dept. received national awards for emergency care for five years in a row from Professional Research Consultants (PRC). VBMC-Brownsville has also received numerous other awards for care of stroke and heart patients.

Dr. Hussain previously received the “Physician of the Year” Award at VBMC-B, in 2007, after being nominated by several employees who cited Dr. Hussain as being kind-hearted, respectful, courteous, generous, approachable, and having an excellent rapport with others.

Dr. Hussain has served as Medical Director of the Emergency Dept. since 2002. He also serves as Chair of the Emergency Care Committee at VBMC-Brownsville, and in 2009 was recognized by the City of Brownsville for helping to enhance community health education.

Dr. Hussain completed a residency in Internal Medicine at the Illinois Masonic Medical Center in Chicago. He also trained in trauma, with a special interest in neuro-trauma, completing a residency in neurosurgery at Lahore General Hospital in Lahore, Pakistan. He is married and has five children.

Maylin Gerardo-Lopez Wins Emergency Nursing Award

The State of Texas Emergency Nurses Association held their second quarter meeting in Corpus Christi on April 16th. Annually the state recognizes nominees from across this great state as leaders in Emergency Care. Valley Baptist was again recognized as a leader in Emergency Care.



This year Valley Baptist was honored when two of our Emergency Department providers were selected to receive these state honors. Maylin Gerardo-

Lopez, RN, BSN, a nurse from the Emergency Department at VBMC-Harlingen, received the Texas Emergency “Rising Star” Award. This award recognizes a new ENA member (membership for less than 5 years) who has made significant contributions to ENA as exhibited by involvement at both the state and local levels, while working to enhance ENA as the professional organization of emergency nurses.

In addition to the ENA award, Maylin also received VBMC-Harlingen’s Staff Nurse of the Year Award, which was presented during Nurses’ Week in May. This award recognized Maylin for her mentoring of new nurses, her leadership in staff nursing, advancing her education, and

for providing excellent clinical skills and patient satisfaction.

Maylin has worked in the ED at Valley Baptist for six years and is currently seeking her Nurse Practitioner certification, through an online program with Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi. Originally from the Philippines, Maylin moved to McAllen when she was 11 years old. Maylin now lives in Harlingen with her husband, Pablo Lopez Jr. Congratulations!

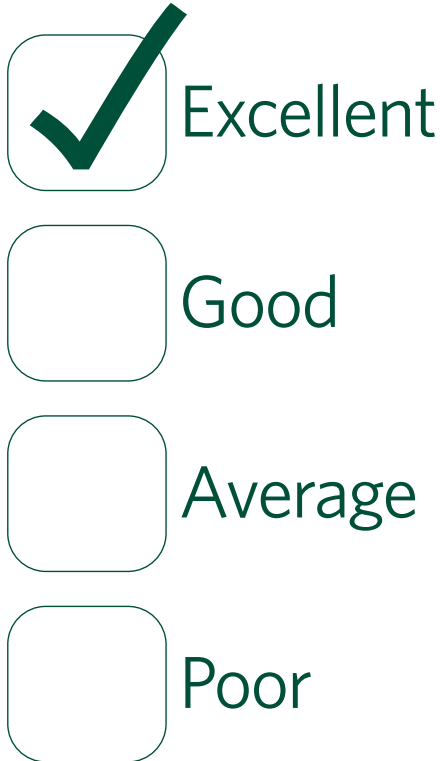
Dr. Khadim Hussain was also recognized and received the ENA’s “Behind the Scenes Award” (see related article in this issue of the CONNECTION).

Pressure Ulcer Survey Helps Improve Nursing Students Skills

In February, VBMC-Harlingen participated in the 2011 Hill-Rom International Pressure Ulcer Prevalence Survey. Hill-Rom has been conducting prevalence studies since 1989 to help organizations assess their pressure ulcer occurrence. There are over 928

organizations involved in the annual event and VBMC-H has been a participant since 2007. Information gained from the survey enables VBMC-H to evaluate our prevention program and compare ourselves to similar facilities, providing the opportunity to improve both patient outcomes and quality of care.

On the day of the survey, students perform head-to-toe skin assessments on all patients and then fill out scantrons on each patient, including demographic information, Braden risk scores, prevention measures in use and information relevant to the presence or absence of a pressure ulcer. The data is then submitted to Hill-Rom for compilation and a final report is presented to each organization. Results from the 2011 survey should be available by late July.



Collaboration with the UTB/TSC ADN program faculty and students began in 2010, when students assisted with data collection as part of their clinical rotation. Based on positive student feedback from the previous year's assignment, the 2011 survey team was expanded to include three clinical groups. UTB/TSC clinical faculty involved with the project this year were Lita Silva, RN, MSN; R. Estaris, RN, BSN, MAN EdD; and Elida Peña, RN, MSN.

In preparation for the survey, students attended a class conducted by Barbara James, RN, MSN, CWON, SWAT/Wound Care Liaison Nurse with Enterostomal Therapy at Valley Baptist, on skin assessment, risk assessment, pressure ulcer staging, preventative measures and data collection.

As part of their assignment, UTB/TSC faculty ask the students to give a written report on their impressions of the experience. "This year my clinical group's reflective writings mentioned how this experience offered for them an opportunity to improve their basic nursing skills regarding skin assessment, careful assessment of high-risk populations and learning best practices for pressure ulcer prevention," said Lita Silva, RN, MSN. She also thanked VBMC-H "for assisting us ... to keep our nursing students engaged in community service and activities that provide an enriched learning environment."



VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

VBMC-Brownsville Auxiliary Volunteer Elena Cuellar was recently recognized for donating 21,500 hours of volunteer service. Thanking Mrs. Cuellar for 21 years of dedication and service is Leslie Bingham, CEO for VBMC-Brownsville. During the past year, a total of 88 volunteers at VBMC-B donated a total of 18,816 hours to help the hospital and its patients.

VBMC Receives Awards for Reducing Re-Admissions

Valley Baptist-Harlingen, Valley Baptist-Brownsville, and Valley Baptist Rehabilitation Services recently received Certificates of Achievement awards for reducing hospital re-admission rates for patients with various conditions, such as heart failure, end-stage renal disease, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), heart attack and pneumonia.

The awards from the TMF Health Quality Institute recognize VBMC-Harlingen for reducing its re-admission rate by 4.2 percent from 2008 to 2010, while VBMC-Brownsville reduced its re-admission rate by 2.8 percent. The reductions exceed the U.S. Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' goal of reducing re-admissions by at least two percent (based on the number of patients who are not re-admitted to the hospital within 30 days after their discharge).

Valley Baptist Rehab Services also received an award for the most improved inpatient rehab facility in reducing re-admissions over the first three months of 2011.

The Valley was the only community in Texas -- and one of only 14 in the nation -- selected to participate in CMS' "Care Transitions Project." The effort in the Valley involved five hospitals from Brownsville, Harlingen and Weslaco, which worked to transition patients back into the community, by working with physicians, home health agencies, outpatient clinics, skilled nursing facilities, rehabilitation centers, and other health care providers.

"The goal is to keep these patients stabilized in the community, rather than having them come back to the Emergency Room or be re-admitted to the hospital," said Pam Warner, RN, BSHA, CPHQ, CPMSM, Administrative Director for Medical Staff Services and Quality Improvement for Valley Baptist.

In achieving the reductions, Valley Baptist sought to increase awareness with its staff and physicians on the importance of avoiding re-admissions. Studies show that patients who are able to see a doctor within five to seven days after their discharge are more likely to stay out of the hospital.

In addition, Valley Baptist focused on identifying high-risk patients and improving patient education and the discharge instructions. Also, Valley Baptist's palliative care program is being expanded.

Robin Jones, Quality Improvement Coordinator at Valley Baptist Medical Center – Brownsville, said additional efforts included improving communication between health care providers at care

transitions and maximizing the use of evidence-based medicine practices.



Valley Baptist-Harlingen received a Certificate of Achievement for reducing re-admissions to the hospital. Showing the award are Pat Palomo, RN, of Nursing Education; Annette Bracken, Palliative Care Coordinator; Patrick Ybarra, RN, Administrative Director of Nursing; Ann McDonald-Upton, CNO for VBMC-H; Dr. James W. Castillo II, Hospitalist; Tina Briones, RN, Ed.D., Vice President; Stephen Hill, RN, Nursing Director; and Marta Lucio, RN, Interim Director of Case Management. Presenting the award are Janice Toreki of the TMF Health Quality Institute in Austin; Alicia Goroski, Project Director for the CMS National Care Transitions Quality Improvement Organization Support Center in Colorado; and Jennifer Markley, Senior Director for the TMF Health Quality Institute. Not pictured is Pam Warner, RN, BSHA, CPHQ, CPMSM, Administrative Director for Quality Improvement and Medical Staff Services.



VBMC-Brownsville recently received an award for reducing hospital re-admission rates. Accepting the Certificate of Achievement for VBMC-B are Rosemarie Del Rosario, RN, BSN, Nursing Director; Rudy Sanchez, RN, Cardiovascular Services Director; Robin Jones, Quality Improvement Coordinator; Leslie Bingham, CEO for VBMC-B; Cary L. Montalvo, Vice President; Marisa Aguilar, RN, BSN, CHRN, Nursing Director; Esmeralda Gomez, Core Measures Specialist; Ray Garcia of Case Management; and Jorge Magallanes, Core Measures Specialist. Presenting the award are Alicia Goroski, Project Director for the CMS National Care Transitions Quality Improvement Organization Support Center in Colorado; Jennifer Markley, Senior Director for the TMF Health Quality Institute in Austin; and Vanessa Andow of the TMF Health Quality Institute.

Seniors Program Gets 2 New Vans to Transport Patients

The Behavioral Health Senior Intensive Outpatient Program at Valley Baptist Behavioral Health recently purchased two new vans to transport patients 55 years of age and older for outpatient treatment and counseling at the seniors' programs in Harlingen and Brownsville. The new vans will help increase access to care by helping to address a transportation barrier for many clients.

The Behavioral Health Senior Intensive Outpatient Program is directed by psychiatrists Dr. Daniel Villarreal, Dr. Francisco J. Torres, and Dr. Gaylyn J. Holstein. The psychiatrists provide an evaluation of each client's treatment needs, prescribe and monitor medications, and supervise treatment, working in close collaboration with the patient's primary care physicians.

A team -- which includes counselors, nurses, and mental health technicians -- carries out the psychiatrist's plan of care and provides a variety of group, family, and individual therapies, individualized to the needs of the client. Becky Tresnicky, LCSW, serves as Director of Valley Baptist Behavioral Health Services.

The program is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. In Harlingen, the seniors' program is located in Valley Baptist's Professional Office Building, 2121 Pease, 3rd Floor, Suite 3A; phone: 389-6578. In Brownsville, the program is located on VBMC-B's East Campus at 1 Ted Hunt Blvd., off Ruben Torres Blvd. (phone: 698-5205). The East Campus also houses Valley Baptist's 37-bed Inpatient Behavioral Health Services Facility for adults ages 17 and older, as well as outpatient psychiatric services on a limited basis for ages 10 and older.



Showing two new vans -- which are used by Valley Baptist's Behavioral Health Senior Intensive Outpatient Program to transport senior behavioral health patients -- are Fred Aguilar, Mental Health Technician; Jordan Killpack, LPC, Program Therapist; Armando Medrano, LPC, Program Manager for the seniors' program at VBMC-H; Alicia Brown, MHT; and Rosie Cavazos, Behavioral Health Business Development Coordinator.

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT

Longtime Valley Baptist Auxiliary Volunteer Elsie Johnson was recently recognized for donating 34,000 hours of volunteer service to VBMC-Harlingen. Thanking Mrs. Johnson for her years of dedication and service are Bill Adams, CEO for Valley Baptist-Harlingen, and Randy Baker, Senior Vice President for the Valley Baptist Foundation. Mrs. Johnson is known as a very special volunteer who enjoys making small satin ribbon crosses for patients, visitors, and others. During the past year, a total of 235 volunteers at VBMC-Harlingen donated a total of 49,036 hours to help the hospital and its patients.



PERFORMANCE AWARDS



Valley Baptist-Brownsville Outpatient Guest Registration employees won gold awards for distinguished performance in meeting goals for the department. Showing the awards, from the left are, JoAnn Froehner, LVN; Josie Ramirez, and insurance verifiers Sandy Alcantara and Leonel Maldonado.



VBMC-Brownsville Women's Center and Emergency Dept. Guest Registration employees won gold awards for distinguished performance in meeting departmental goals. Showing the awards, in the front row, are patient access representatives Tiffany Adeigbe and Norma Martinez; and Adriana Diaz, insurance verifier. Standing is Lupita Aguirre; Financial Counselor; and Martin Rivera, patient access representative. Not pictured are patient access representatives Sonia Morales, Elizabeth Figueroa, Barbara Lerma, Griselda Rangel, Estela Blanco, Jorge Arredondo, Karla Lebaron, Rina Bhatka, Juan Tobar, Eder Guerrero and Aracely Gonzalez.



VBMC-Brownsville Outpatient Guest Registration employees recently won gold awards for distinguished performance in meeting departmental goals. Showing the awards, in the front row, are patient access representatives Barbara Garcia, Cristina Garcia, and Blanca Gamez. In the back row are Alma Acevedo, patient access representative; Leonel Maldonado, insurance verifier; Josefina Ramirez; Jesus Galvan, patient access representative; and Jorge de la Fuente, Financial Counselor.

Who's On The Back Cover

Clockwise from the top (A) A "Back to the Basics" Nursing Fair was held by the VBMC-H Nursing Professional Development Council May 9 as part of Nurses Week activities at Valley Baptist. Cristina Almanza, RN, Clinical Supervisor for 3SE and 6ST, gives hands out on the nursing fair to Cindy Quintanar, LVN; Mary Garcia, CNA; and Martha Aparacio, CNA, of Neuro / Med-Surg (3SE, formerly 2NW, which is now located on the third floor of the East Tower). **(B)** Accepting a Certificate of Achievement for Valley Baptist Rehabilitation Services (for reducing re-admission rates) are Marisol Pelaez, RN, CRRN, Rehabilitation Services Nurse Manager; Dr. Dorothy S. Nesmith, Physiatrist; and Cindi D. Brent, Director of Clinical Services. Presenting the award are Janice Toreki of the TMF Health Quality Institute in Austin; Alicia Goroski, Project Director for the CMS National Care Transitions Quality Improvement Organization Support Center in Colorado; and Jennifer Markley, Senior Director for the TMF Health Quality Institute. **(C)** Rehabilitation Services staff at Valley Baptist-Brownsville helped patient Lucia Castillo, center, every step of the way as she made a remarkable recovery after suffering a crippling aneurism, which left her totally immobile and bedridden. Mrs. Castillo, a former CNA at VBMC-H, is now learning to walk and talk again, with the help of a team that includes, from the left, her husband Daniel Castillo; Rose Hernandez, Rehab Technician for Valley Baptist-Brownsville; Kimberly Gonzalez, Occupational Therapist; Cathy Gross, Physical Therapy Assistant; Spiros Katzakis, OTR, Program Director for Rehabilitation Services at Valley Baptist-Brownsville; and Davetrina (Seles) Gadson, MS, CCC-SLP, Speech-Language Pathologist. **(D)** Four nurses at VBMC-Brownsville recently received the "DAISY Award for Extraordinary Nurses" after hospital patients and family members commended them for going "above and beyond" in providing excellent, professional and compassionate care. From the left are Annie Mendoza, Chief Nursing Officer for VBMC-B; DAISY Award winners Tiffany Tryon, RN, of Labor & Delivery; Sonia Paez, LVN, of Pediatrics; Heather Thiel, RN, of the Wound Care Center; and Gayle Porter, RN, of 3-T; and Dr. Jose Ayala, DPM, CWS, Director of the Foot Care Institute at VBMC-B.

Social Media



www.facebook.com/valleybaptistmedicalcenter



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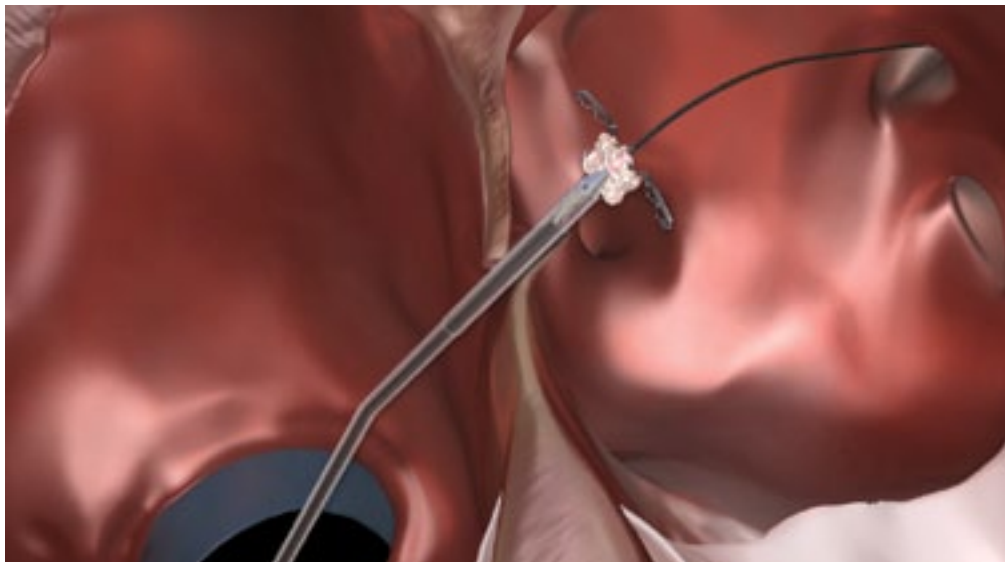


www.youtube.com/user/VBMCmedia



www.vimeo.com/valleybaptist

Advances in Technology at Valley Baptist Benefit Heart Patients



Physicians at Valley Baptist Medical Center-Harlingen are using ultrasound and “flow technology” to determine the severity of blockages in the heart’s blood vessels in Valley patients.

“Not all blockages of blood vessels are created equal,” said Dr. Charles Mild, Cardiologist and Medical Director of the Cardiac Catheterization Lab at Valley Baptist-Harlingen. “Some blockages are very stable and only need medicine to treat them ... while other blockages are quite unstable, and require stents or other treatment to prevent significant heart damage from occurring.”

Dr. Mild said Valley Baptist has many tools in its state-of-the-art arsenal of treatment, to help make the best, individualized decision for each patient. The latest addition to Valley Baptist’s updated technology allows the physician to place a small catheter inside the heart artery of the patient during the cardiac catheterization procedure. This allows “visualization” of the artery under X-rays, from the inside of the artery.

Using this technology, the physician can “look” directly at the cholesterol plaque, which may be impeding the flow of blood

through the blood vessel. Measurements taken of the pressure and flow of blood above and below a blockage help to determine how severe the blockage is. This additional information provided by the ultrasound, “fractional flow reserve,” and “virtual histology” technology allows the physician to have all the facts when deciding whether to place a stent into a patient. This is information that can not be provided by simple angiogram alone.

“This helps show us who really needs a stent - but just as importantly, it helps determine who will not benefit from a stent,” Dr. Mild added. “It helps put facts and evidence-based medicine into who gets a stent.”

“VALLEY BAPTIST HAS BEEN AND CONTINUES TO BE AT THE FOREFRONT IN TREATING HEART DISEASE”

“Valley Baptist has been and continues to be at the forefront in treating heart disease,” Dr. Mild added.

He added that Valley Baptist is experienced at using the Fractional Flow Reserve technology and many procedures that benefit heart and vascular patients.

In addition, Valley Baptist can reduce the amount of time spent in bed after having a procedure, through the use of “radial approach angiogram.” When a patient needs an angiogram of their heart, typically a small tube called a sheath is placed in the femoral artery (a large artery which is located in the groin, near the leg) and catheters are advanced to the heart from this area. Due to the fact that this is a large blood vessel, bed rest after the procedure can be as long as six hours -- with the patient having to lie flat on his or her back in bed. However, as an alternative, physicians at Valley Baptist are able to use a blood vessel in the wrist to perform the same procedure (in most patients). “The difference is that it is not necessary to lay flat in bed -- and recovery times are shorter,” Dr. Mild said. “The biggest concern of patients after a procedure tends to be associated with lying flat for so long. This approach alleviates that concern.”

Parker MacDonald RN, CCRN, Manager of Invasive Cardiology for Valley Baptist-Harlingen, stated that “our patients’ comfort and well-being is our outmost concern at Valley Baptist, as we are interested in providing excellent customer service to the community we have been serving for the last 85 years -- and will continue to do so, into the future.”

Valley Baptist Accounting Services: **BREAKING** the Stereotype

By Kimberly Beneke, Asst. VP of Finance

The stereotypes of all workplace industries are laughable: that librarians never have any fun; that mail carriers are all on the verge of going “postal”; and that accountants are all grey, dull and boring. If you take away the green eye shades, pocket protectors and adding machines, the individuals in the Valley Baptist Accounting Department are all (well okay, mostly) very fun, happy, and extroverted individuals.

Case in point: The Accounting Department coordinates the annual budgets with department directors. We assist directors with the development of the budget as well as provide useful financial advice around the individual department’s business plan. When, however, a department director wants to budget an unreasonable amount of money that doesn’t quite fit within the predetermined amount allotted, we smile at them with big teeth and a lot of personality and kindly say, “Okay, let’s start over.”

Throughout the year, the Accounting Department records, analyzes and reports the financial transactions of the entire Health System. The department consists of payroll, accounts receivable, accounts payable and staff accountants.

The payroll clerks process payroll for 3,000+ employees on a biweekly basis, field phone calls from employees, and do all this with a very customer service-oriented, friendly, outgoing attitude.

The accounts payable

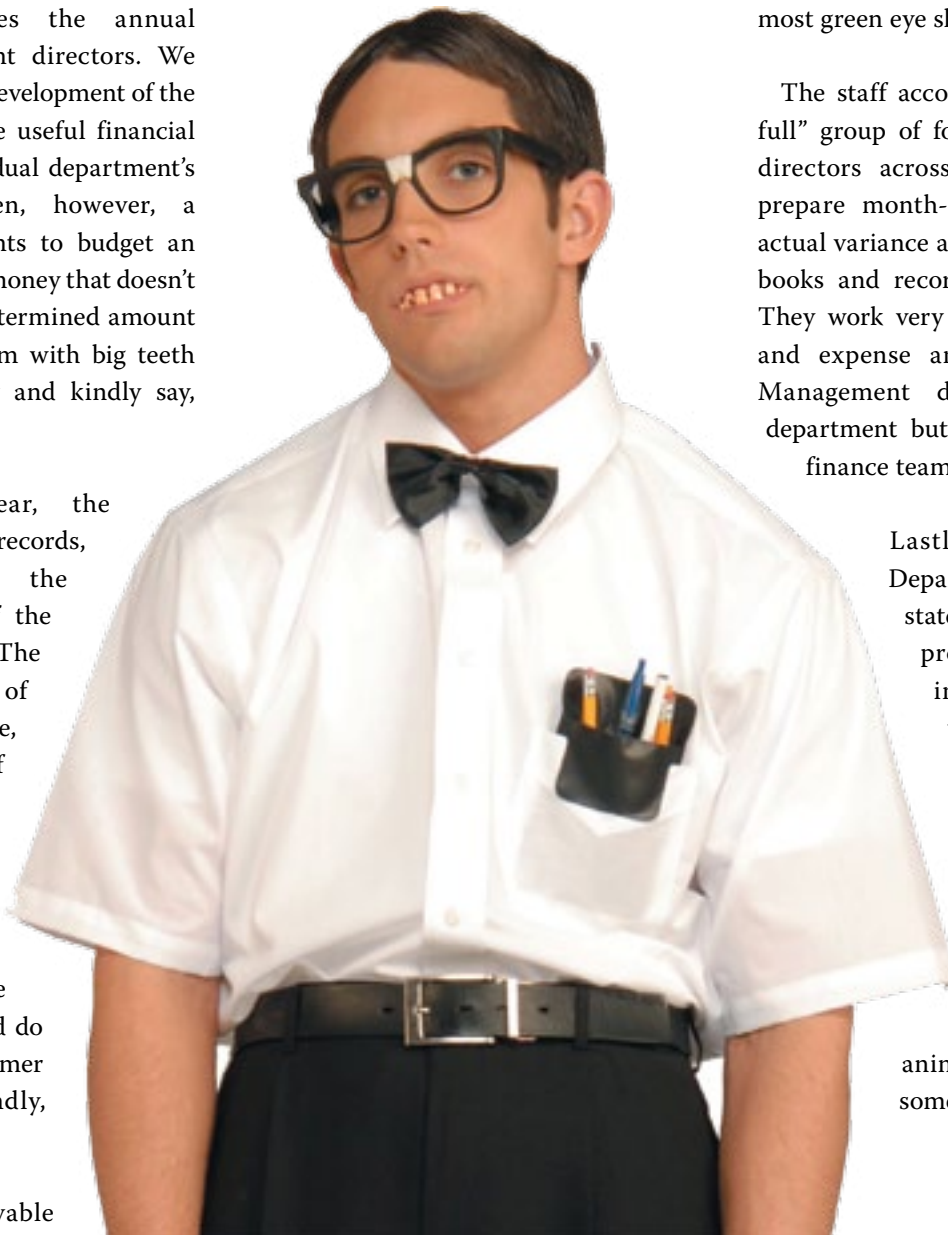
department gets to have the most fun. They have the distinct honor of visiting with vendors to discuss questions and concerns on billing and payment terms, as well as stalking the department directors and others for PO approvals. When all approvals have been received and the PO has been entered, the vendor invoice is matched up and the checks are cut. Just like that (well, sort of). Our AP folks definitely have an exciting job and take every opportunity to enjoy a group “high five” when cash management objectives have been met.

The accounts receivable department works very closely with the Patient Accounts department and with the individual Valley Baptist entities that perform their own billing functions. Their goal is to make sure that all patient accounts’ receivable have been properly contractualized and that the amount of uncollectible accounts have been appropriately estimated. This is the most complex area of health care accounting, which requires the most analysis and bean counting. It is probably this area of the Accounting Department that owns the most green eye shades, to be honest.

The staff accountants are a “glass half-full” group of folks who coordinate with directors across the Health System to prepare month-end accruals, budget to actual variance analyses, and who keep the books and records reconciled and clean. They work very closely with the revenue and expense analysts of the Financial Management department, a separate department but integral part of the VB finance team.

Lastly, the Accounting Department prepares financial statements for management, providing analyses and interpretation to assist the executives in making critical business decisions.

So, you can call us nerdy. You can call us boring and dull. But at the end of the day, there is a party animal lurking inside us all somewhere.



Rare Adrenal Tumor Removed Using Laparoscopic Surgery

Dr. Ashraf Hilmy, General, Vascular and Advanced Laparoscopic Surgeon, has performed the first laparoscopic surgery at Valley Baptist-Harlingen to remove a dangerous type of adrenal tumor, with the less-invasive procedure benefitting a Valley woman by speeding her healing time.

The first “laparoscopy adrenalectomy for pheochromocytoma” surgery went very well for the patient, a Hispanic woman in her 50’s, Dr. Hilmy said.

“This is the first surgery in the Harlingen area of its type performed laparoscopically as far as I know,” Dr. Hilmy added. “Adrenal tumors are extremely rare – this is the first time that I’ve seen a pheochromocytoma tumor here.”

While adrenal tumors can be benign (non-cancerous) or cancerous, most of the rare “pheochromocytoma” tumors are not cancerous. These tumors occur in the core

of the adrenal glands, which are located close to the kidneys. The adrenal glands produce hormones which help regulate metabolism, hair growth, and many other functions in the body. But a pheochromocytoma tumor can cause the adrenal glands to produce too much of the hormones epinephrine and norepinephrine, which can cause high blood pressure and a very rapid heartbeat. This can be very dangerous to the heart – and even life-threatening if not treated and removed surgically.

During the laparoscopy adrenalectomy surgery, physicians make a small cut in the back or side, and insert a scope – a miniature camera attached to a thin, flexible tube. Surgeons then take out the tumor through small incisions.

Because Dr. Hilmy used the innovative laparoscopic technique instead of traditional surgery through the chest or abdomen, there was no need for large incisions in the patient. This meant less pain and blood loss

for her – and a shorter stay in the hospital.

Dr. Alfredo Garcia, Endocrinologist and Medical Director of the Valley Baptist Diabetes Education Center; Dr. Joel Pallapati of Su Clinica Familiar; and Dr. Niru Cepeda-Iruegas participated in caring for the patient before and after her surgery at VBMC-H.

In addition to laparoscopic surgery, Dr. Hilmy has also used other non-invasive surgical techniques, including the da Vinci® robot at VBMC-H, for general surgeries. For more information on minimally-invasive surgery options, consult your physician and visit www.ValleyBaptist.net.

Diabetes Center Celebrating 30th Anniversary, Recertified by ADA

The VBMC-Harlingen Diabetes Education Center, which is celebrating its 30th Anniversary this year, was recently re-certified by the American Diabetes Association through January, 2015.

Receiving recognition status for diabetes self-management involves a long, lengthy process of meeting various standards, and is a reflection of the hard work of the Diabetes Education team, which includes Dr. Alfredo Garcia, Medical Director; Stephen Hill, RN, BSN, MBA, Administrative Director

of Nursing; Certified Diabetes Educators Luisa Acosta, RN, BSN, CDE and Maria D. Gonzales, RN, BSN, CDE; and Department Secretary Irma Trevino.

The Diabetes Education Center is located along with the Valley Baptist Wound Care Center in the Valley Baptist Medical Arts Pavilion, 2121 Pease Street, Entrance A, on the second floor (Suite 201; phone: 389-1119).





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Charity Hill, left, Physical Therapist with Rehabilitation Services at Valley Baptist-Brownsville, worked closely to establish a good rapport with patient Lucia Castillo, who has made outstanding progress since coming to VBMC-Brownsville. Mrs. Castillo's husband Danny said that Charity and other therapists at VBMC-Brownsville made Mrs. Castillo feel at home and helped to "turn her life around."